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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: PRT NINEWA: AMBASSADOR'S SENIOR ADVISOR FOR
NORTHERN IRAQ MEETS NINEWA LEADERSHIP

Classified By: A/DCM Gary A. Grappo for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (U) Summary: The Ambassador's Senior Advisor for Northern Iraq, Alan Misenheimer, joined Ninewa PRT on September 22-24 for a tour of Ninewa, meeting key political and religious leaders and gaining a first-hand view of the province. In extended conversations, the Senior Advisor heard from Sunni Arab leaders like Ninewa Governor Atheel al-Nujaifi and Sheikh Abdullah al-Yawar al-Shammari (details on the latter reported septel), Kurdish politicians (KDP Mosul chief Khisro Goran and Sinjar Mayor Dakhel Qasim Hassun) and Christian leaders in the disputed district of Tel Kayf. The meetings underscored the importance of urging continued progress on efforts to broker a power-sharing agreement between Arab and Kurdish politicians in Mosul, and highlighted the extent to which the presence of Peshmerga and Assayesh elements in areas of Ninewa not considered to be historically Kurdish constitutes a potential flashpoint. End summary.
GOVERNOR DISPARAGES GOI, PREDICTS LOW VOTER TURNOUT

2. (C) On September 24, the Senior Advisor and PRT TL met with Ninewa Governor Atheel al-Nujaifi. Al-Nujaifi expressed frustration with the central government in Baghdad. Claiming the GOI wanted any measures towards reconciliation to "be on their terms and beneficial to their political agenda", he flatly said the central government did not want Arab-Kurd reconciliation. He noted that there was insufficient political will at the national level to "pay the hard prices" required to achieve reconciliation, in part because PM Maliki's government was too thin-skinned and "could not bear to have anything said against it".

3. (C) Al-Nujaifi predicted low voter turnout and said Iraqis were "lukewarm" about the upcoming national election, mostly because they were largely uninterested in politics. The majority of Iraqis still believe the political process is dominated by dynamics and personalities beyond their ability to influence, and therefore see little value in voting or other forms of political participation. The Senior Advisor noted that while the U.S. could provide technical support to the elections, it was ultimately up to the Iraqi people - with encouragement from their leaders - to participate. Al-Nujaifi claimed that political campaigning was currently impossible in many areas of the province because of the presence of Peshmerga forces, which blocked al-Hadba and other non-Kurdish politicians from entering them and which would impede free and fair voting in the upcoming election unless checked.

GREATER U.S. ROLE DESIRED

4. (C) Al-Nujaifi called on the U.S. to play a greater role in resolving Arab-Kurd issues in Ninewa. Claiming the KRG had recently deployed additional Peshmerga forces to areas of Ninewa and Sinjar, he complained that the Peshmerga had deliberately expanded their presence well beyond positions they originally held as a blocking force against Saddam's Iraqi Army. Peshmerga and Assayesh (Kurdish intelligence)

forces were actively harassing non-Kurds, who believed the Kurds were trying to lay claim to sizeable portions of Ninewa as a bargaining chip in eventual final status negotiations. Non-Kurds were keen to prevent any further movement of Peshmerga reinforcements into Ninewa Province; Coalition Forces could and should do more to push back against Peshmerga and Asayish encroachment.

15. (C) On the effort led by DPM Rafi al-Issawi to broker a provincial power-sharing agreement between al-Hadba and the Qprovincial power-sharing agreement between al-Hadba and the (Kurdish) Ninewa Fraternal League, al-Nujaifi called for implementation of measures the two sides had already agreed on. Agreement had been reached on issues such as member participation in the Provincial Council, putting Kurdish teachers on the province's payroll, payment of damages claims and proportional recruitment from Ninewa of new cadres for the Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army. Those measures should in his view be implemented regardless of whether the more contentious disagreements over leadership positions and withdrawal of the Peshmerga and Assayesh were reached.

THE KURDISH VIEW IN NINEWA

16. (C) The Senior Advisor also met on September 24 with Khisro Goran, Mosul chief of the Kurdish Democratic Party and former Ninewa Vice Governor. Goran reiterated his support for a joint security initiative in the DIBs until a permanent solution could be reached under the rubric of Article 140 of the constitution. Goran believed DPM al-Issawi genuinely wanted to achieve progress in reconciling Arab-Kurd tensions in Ninewa, in part to burnish his image in advance of the national election. He assessed that al-Issawi has "some

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influence" over al-Nujaifi and rejected the idea - rumored in some GOI circles - that negotiations between al-Hadba and the Ninewa Fraternal League in Ninewa be postponed until after the election. At the same time, he made clear his strong personal antipathy toward al-Nujaifi.

UNLESS KIRKUK VOTES, KURDS WILL MEDDLE WITH MOSUL

17. (C) On the national election, Goran flatly said that unless a mechanism were found to allow Kirkuk to participate, the Kurds would prevent elections from happening in Mosul as well. Provincial elections in Kirkuk in January 2009 had been canceled to prevent an electoral rout by Kurds and the national census had been canceled because Arabs feared it would substantiate claims of a clear Kurdish majority in Kirkuk, he said. Kurds would not countenance exempting Kirkuk from the national election. Asked about a proposal that parliamentary seats be apportioned on a 32-32-32-4 (Arab-Kurd-Turkoman-Minorities) basis, Goran argued that if such a formula were used for Kirkuk, it should be also used for Mosul.

ASSAYESH DO NOT (NOW) DETAIN INDIVIDUALS

18. (C) Asked about allegations of extrajudicial detentions and abuse by the Assayesh in Kurd-controlled areas of Ninewa, Goran claimed it was an unarmed organization that only collected intelligence about extremist groups and worked to disrupt them. When pressed, he conceded that the Assayesh sometimes obtain information about "bad guys" and "asked them to appear for questioning", but claimed that only occurred in Kurdish-held areas, and not in Mosul itself. He quickly added that the Assayesh do not have the right to arrest or detain individuals, but conceded that there "may have been some incidents" in the past in which the Assayesh exceeded their brief.

SINJARIS LIKE JCPS; CHRISTIANS DECRY LACK OF RESULTS

19. (C) The Senior Advisor, PRT TL, and 3-1 Cavalry Brigade Commander paid a courtesy call on Dakhel Qasim Hassun, the

Mayor of Kurdish-controlled Sinjar District in western Ninewa. Dakhel expressed support for joint checkpoints (three of which have been proposed in Sinjar) and restated the Kurdish party line that the Article 140 process must proceed. He also alleged that Sheikh Abdullah al-Yawar and Mohammed Yunis, a former Ba'athist general, worked together to finance terrorist operations.

¶10. (C) On a visit to the Christian village of Al Qosh in the disputed district of Tel Kayf, the Senior Advisor and PRT TL met with Mayor Bassim Bello and later with Chaldean priests at the Dair Rabban Hurmiz Monastery. At both locations, Christian leaders spoke about the difficulties of living under Kurdish forces. Bello complained of the illegal presence of Peshmerga and Assayesh in his district and objected to the term 'disputed area' - in his opinion, there is no dispute that it is Christian territory (as opposed to Arab or Kurdish). Bello also cited the increasing number of Christian families who leave the area for destinations outside of Iraq due to economic hardship, a point echoed later by one of the priests at the monastery. The priests also expressed displeasure with U.S. policies, saying people had great hope when the U.S. arrived, but now, despite billions of dollars spent, they still lack basic services.

¶11. (C) Comment: The Senior Advisor took advantage of his first trip to Ninewa to meet a wide variety of players in the province and to underscore to his interlocutors the high level of USG interest in the current situation in Ninewa. The meetings underscored the importance of urging continued progress on the DPM al-Issawi effort to broker an al-Hadba-Ninewa Fraternal League power-sharing agreement, in part to help mitigate any putative effort by the Kurds to hold Mosul hostage to ensure that Kirkuk is able to participate in the upcoming election. Gaining an understanding of how provocative the presence of Peshmerga and Assayesh elements in areas of Ninewa not considered to be historically Kurdish was equally important. As we move ahead with efforts to promote Arab-Kurd reconciliation, we will need to consider what our position is with respect to the continued presence of Peshmerga and Assayesh in those areas. End comment.
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